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No Need to Pay for Filing a Consumer Complaint

It might be a scam.... or not. It could be a way for Internet scammers to get your credit card information, while attempting to hide behind what might appear to be a needed service. But consumer protection advocates are warning Utah consumers not to pay to file a complaint with the Utah Division of Consumer Protection.

It appears, says Francine Giani, Director of the Utah Division of Consumer Protection, that an on-line company calling itself "*consumerprotectionagency.us*" is charging consumers \$4.95 to file a complaint with state and federal consumer offices and with the Better Business Bureau. Something she says no one even needs to pay for.

"This strikes me as a blatant rip off of someone who has already been victimized," said Giani. "There is no charge to file a complaint with the Utah Division of Consumer Protection, or any other public consumer protection agency. For someone under the guise of 'private enterprise' to attempt to squeeze five bucks out of someone who is seeking help is immoral."

Giani says that in addition to questions regarding deceptive marketing and misrepresentation, the company is further victimizing customers because information provided to the Division, under the pretext of filing a complaint, is often incomplete, making it impossible for an investigation to be undertaken.

"If the information that was being sent to us was accurate and complete, an argument might be made that this company was providing a marginal service. But about four out of five of the complaints that we receive from this source are so incomplete that we cannot even look into the matter."

Giani says that the best way for consumers to file a complaint is to go to the Division's website at **consumerprotection.utah.gov**, download a complaint form, fill it out and return it to the Division. She also stresses that this is free of charge.

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